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ABSTRACT

Three pamphlets describe facets of "Encendiendo Una Llama," a Hartford (Connecticut) demonstration program for bilingual gifted and talented students. An overview pamphlet summarizes key aspects of the model program: identification procedures, instructional services, teacher training, parent involvement, evidence of effectiveness, implementation requirements, and materials available for dissemination. A second brochure focuses in greater depth on aspects of identification, including linguistic and cultural factors. The program's identification efforts are focused primarily, though not exclusively, on the limited English proficient school population. The 3-stage identification process consists of open recruitment, talent pool, and formal identification. Parallel identification procedures for academic and artistic ability are used. Standardized tests and locally developed information forms are noted. A third brochure describes instructional approaches, including components of the program model (resource room, after-school program, and regular class component), staff development, student needs assessment, and curriculum components based on Renzulli's Enrichment Triad and bilingual education. Finally, sample curriculum units, the use of computers, and materials available for dissemination are cited. (JW)

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Encendiendo Una Llama

Bilingual Gifted and Talented Program

Hartford, Connecticut

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EC 200 582

Why are Hispanic and other limited English proficient children not involved in gifted and talented programs to the same extent as English dominant children? That was the question which confronted the Hartford, Conn. public school system several years ago. Our conclusion was not that there was a lack of ability in these children, but that there was a lack of appropriate services for them. Our response was to establish a comprehensive bilingual gifted and talented program, staffed by bilingual teachers, and serving students in an integrated contect, regardless of language dominance. The program, called "Encendiendo Una Llama", or "Lighting a Flame", has been in operation since 1979. It is funded by Title VII (federal Bilingual Education funds) as a National Demonstration Project.

"Already we have seen the impact of this program on participatns from previous years. They have begun to receive awards and other recognition for their intellectual and creative accomplishments."

Daniel Barstow
Project Director

Identification

Children are identified for the program through a Referral Form, Student Interview, Parent Questionnaire, work samples, standardized tests and trial participation. All forms and tests are available in English and Spanish. The program uses a "Talent Pool" approach, in which about 15% of the school's total population are identified as potentially gifted or talented. Based on their demonstrated achievements in the program, about one third of the students in the talent pool are then formally identified as intellectually gifted or artistically talented.

Instruction

The instructional approaches emphasize language development (in English and Spanish), higher level thinking skills, independent work and study skills, and development of creative thinking. Students participate individually and in small groups for instructional units and independent projects related to their strengths and interest areas.

There are three components of the instructional services:

1. **Resource Room**—a bilingual gifted and talented resource teacher serves students from the talent pool through a part-time pull-out approach during the school day.

2. **After School Program**—selected students participate in an after school program (4 days per week), which is staffed by regular classroom teachers who are specially trained to teach in the after school program.

3. **Regular Classroom Component**—regular classroom teachers provide some acceleration and enrichment activities for gifted and talented students in their classrooms. Supportive materials are provided by the "Llama" program.

Teacher Training

The program trains resource teachers and after school staff through an initial concentrated training period, and then through on-going after school training sessions. The program trains regular classroom teachers through Saturday workshops, a summer workshop, individual communications, and the provision of supplementary information and materials.

Parent Involvement

Parents participate in various ways throughout the year. The identification process includes parent participation in a "Planning and Placement Team" meeting for each identified child. There also are individual and small group meetings throughout the year, dealing with such topics as identification, instructional services, and community resources. Parents are also taught about supportive activities that they can do with their children at home or in the community. Open houses and project newspapers provide additional information for the parents.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The program has been officially validated by the Connecticut State Department of Education as an effective program. Pre- and post-tests indicated educationally significant gains in English and Spanish reading, English and Spanish oral skills, math and creativity. Also, student academic and artistic projects were evaluated by project staff and outside experts as being of a "high caliber".

Implementation Requirements

For school districts wishing to adopt the model, the program can be implemented either as a comprehensive bilingual gifted and talented program, or as an adjunct to an existing monolingual gifted and talented program.

As a school-day resource program, one full-time resource teacher is necessary, along with a resource room and materials. If the after school program is implemented, a few part-time teachers will be needed. At least one member of the project staff must be bilingual.

Dissemination of Materials

Hand-outs include: identification forms, instructional guidelines, evaluation procedures, and parent materials. Project staff are also developing a series of videotapes for training and dissemination. Training may be conducted at project or adopter site. Visitors are welcome by appointment.

Daniel Barstow
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"Encendiendo Una Llama"
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This work was developed under a grant with the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs of the United States Department of Education. The content, however, does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of OBEMLA / USDE. No official endorsement of these materials should be inferred.

Encendiendo Una Llama

Identification of Students Bilingual Gifted and Talented Program

Hartford, Connecticut

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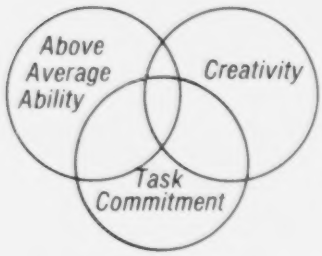
These materials were written by Daniel Barstow, Project Director of "Encendiendo Una Llama". Funds for "Encendiendo Una Llama" were provided by the Hartford Public Schools and by a federal grant authorized through Title VII (Bilingual Education Act) of the E.S.E.A.—Academic Excellence Program.

Definition:

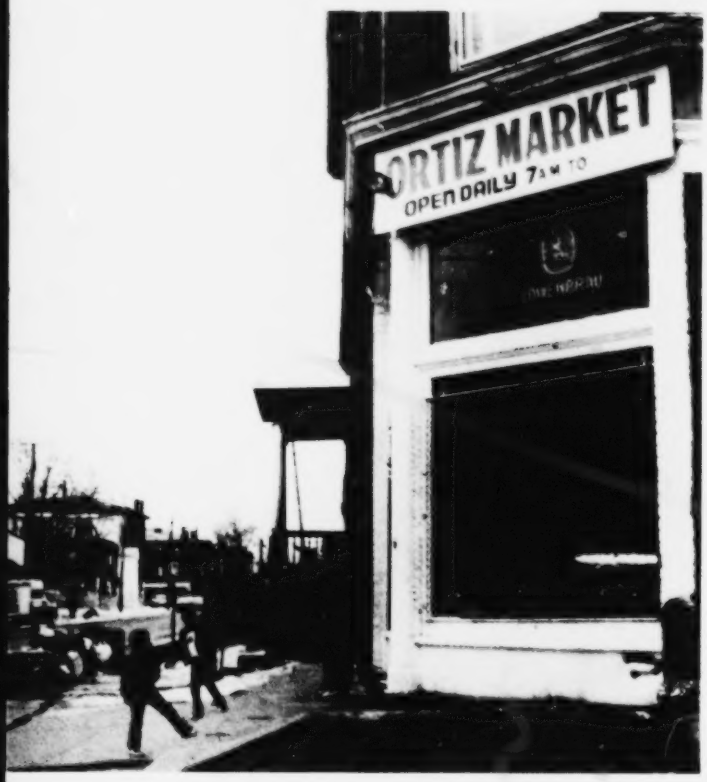
"We have high expectations for these children. We expect them to be the future scientists, artists, musicians, and political leaders of our country. We want them to discover planets, make medical discoveries, compose music, resolve international problems . . . "

Dino A. Galiano
Assistant Superintendent
for Instructional Support

Hartford defines gifted and talented children as those with "extraordinary learning ability" and/or "outstanding talent in the creative arts". These children demonstrate an interaction among three clusters of traits:



Language:



When we consider the identification of gifted and talented children who are limited in English proficiency, we are dealing with a unique sub-population with its own characteristics. Linguistically, they are more likely to demonstrate their superior abilities in their dominant language. Most of these children are also in the process of learning English as a second language, and this developing bilingualism is clearly an intellectual strength. On the other hand, their limitations in English may have hindered some of their school and community learning experiences. An equitable identification process must neither exclude limited English proficient children, nor be blind to the intellectual & linguistic strengths of children who are fully bilingual.

Culture:

Cultural factors also need to be considered. One must be familiar with the experiential background, community values, environmental resources, residential history and other factors which can affect the development and manifestation of special abilities.

In Hartford, as part of our research for the bilingual gifted and talented program, we conducted "Community Interviews" of local Hispanic (primarily Puerto Rican) parents, teachers, administrators, artists, and community leaders. The interviewees mentioned several types of environmental factors which can affect the development of special abilities in Hispanic children.

The interviewees spoke of ***favorable*** factors, such as the fact that cities have a wealth of resource people, places, and agencies to help children learn; the active urban environment can develop alertness and observation skills; and the lack of "fancy toys" can stimulate creativity in children who invent toys from things found on the streets or in the home.

They also mentioned ***unfavorable*** factors, such as the fact that limited English proficiency may prevent participation in some educational activities in school and/or city; high mobility may interrupt the child's normal educational development; poverty may limit the resources provided the child at home; and parents may not have the time or educational background to tutor or otherwise provide educational help at home.

Our most important conclusion was that socio-economic level was the single most significant factor affecting the development of gifts and talents, and that an equitable identification process must take this into consideration.

Hartford's Identification System:

Based on our initial research, Hartford developed an identification system that is bilingual, multifaceted, and takes into consideration the unique environmental and experiential backgrounds of our students. Over the years, we have identified over 500 LEP gifted and talented students. The identification package appears to be effective, comprehensive and unique in the nation. It is based, in part, on the "Revolving Door Identification Model" developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli of the University of Connecticut.

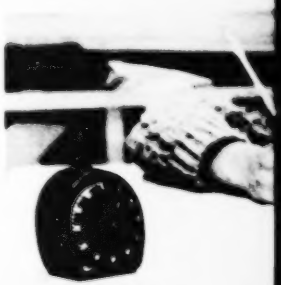
An important preliminary step of the entire identification process is the orientation session for classroom teachers, school administration, and other school-based personnel. The content includes an overview of the "Encendiendo Una Llama" identification system, a discussion of the characteristics of gifted and talented children, and orientation on some of the aforementioned cultural and linguistic factors.

We are focusing our identification efforts on limited English proficient gifted and talented children, who comprise over 60% of the population in the participating schools. However, in order to provide these children with a more linguistically stimulating instructional program and environment, and to provide appropriate services to other gifted and talented children in the participating schools, we also identify English dominant children using the same process.

After completion of the preliminary training, there are three stages to the identification process:

1. Open Recruitment The first stage is "open recruitment", in which the resource teachers actively search for potentially gifted and talented students from a variety of sources. The sources include: referral by classroom teachers and other school personnel; parental recommendation; students who scored well on standardized tests; students who have received school awards (e.g. science fairs, art shows, spelling bees); and the provision of "opportunities for talent to surface".

2. Talent Pool—After a preliminary review by the resource teacher, a "Talent Pool" list is formed, with the names of all students with indicators of high ability or potential. This review process is designed



to begin the collection of information confirming each child's abilities, and to weed out students who are clearly inappropriate. All talent pool students are eligible for program services, in a form of "trial participation. The trial participation is a very important part of the identification process, in that it enables the resource teachers to observe the students more directly, and to provide additional "opportunities for talent to surface". The talent pool approach enables a wider number of students to be served, and thus keeps the process open, especially for disadvantaged students. Typically, about 10 to 15% of the total school population is included in the talent pool.

3. Formal Identification The third stage is "formal identification", in which a select group of participating students are formally identified as intellectually gifted and/or artistically talented, based on the trial participation, supportive test data, and a cumulative record review. Hartford uses a "Planning & Placement Team" (PPT) process for this stage. The PPT is a group meeting designed to review all available information about an individual child, in order to confirm the formal identification of the child as academically gifted and/or artistically talented, in the context of his or her unique educational background and in comparison with other referred students. The PPT members include the resource teacher, the classroom teacher, the Principal and the parents. The end product of the PPT is an "Individualized Educational Program" (IEP). The IEP, in addition to specifying individualized educational objectives, officially commits Hartford to providing services to the identified child until the child graduates, leaves the school system or is formally exited because of consistently poor performance.

Talent pool students who have not been formally identified through the PPT process remain eligible for services until the end of the year, at which time the resource teacher reviews their status and progress to determine whether or not to retain them in the talent pool for the following year.

Academic vs. Artistic Abilities:

There actually are two parallel identification criteria, one for academic ability and one for artistic ability (some children qualify under both). In either case the identification process is as described above. However, intellectually gifted students are judged on the basis of their academic strengths, whereas artistically talented students must show their "above average ability, creativity, and task commitment" in their area of talent (there is no academic requirement for artistically talented students). We rely especially on the opinions of each school's art and music teachers for identifying talent.

Tests Administered

Although we have concluded that the demonstrated performance through trial participation is the most valid indicator of giftedness, we do use three tests to provide supplementary information. The tests are administered in the child's dominant language:

—Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT): a test battery, in English, measuring achievement in Language, Reading and Math.

—Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills/Espanol (C.T.B.S./Espanol): a test battery, in Spanish, measuring achievement in Language, Reading and Math.

—Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Figural): a three part test, available in English and Spanish, designed to measure four aspects of creative thinking — fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

Forms Available:

As part of our identification process, we use a series of locally developed forms, all of which are available for dissemination.

The ***Preliminary Referral Form*** is used by classroom teachers to nominate students for the program, and to provide supportive information about them.

The ***Individualized Educational Program*** is used to record the abilities, strengths and interests of the child; the proficiency levels in English and Spanish; and the instructional objectives and planned activities.

The ***Student Interview,*** which is available in English and Spanish, is used to interview talent pool students in order to learn more about the child's strengths and interests. It also provides "Llama" staff an opportunity to give the child a brief orientation about the program and the procedures being followed.

The ***Parent Interview,*** which is also available in English and Spanish, is conducted at school or at home, in order to find out more about the child's home environment and the parents' perceptions of the child's abilities.

The ***Cumulative Record Review*** provides a convenient summary of pertinent data from the child's cumulative record. Items include grades, mobility, teacher comments, and information about language development.

Conclusion

Current estimates are that there are approximately 3,000,000 limited English proficient school children in this country. If we use a standard guideline that 10% of a given population is likely to be academically gifted or artistically talented, then we estimate that there are 300,000 gifted and talented limited English proficient children in this country! The vast majority of these children are not being identified, and their potential accomplishments and contributions to our society may be lost. We feel that the identification process described here can help solve that very serious problem.

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Instructional Approaches for Bilingual Gifted and Talented Children

Hartford, Connecticut

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"We see bilingualism as an intellectual strength, as one of the advantages that these children bring into our school system.

Hernan LaFontaine
Superintendent of Schools

Because of their unique intellectual abilities gifted and talented children are in need of "differentiated education", with instructional approaches, materials, and curriculum that are different from the mainstream program. These children need instructional activities that challenge them, stimulate their higher level thinking skills, develop their oral and written language skills, enrich their experiential background, give them opportunities to apply or transfer what they learn, stimulate creative and productive endeavors, and provide for their affective development. All of these activities should be at a higher level of difficulty appropriate to their superior abilities and/or potential.

Gifted and talented children who are also limited in English proficiency have unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds which need to be taken into consideration in designing appropriate educational programs. Their instructional activities should build on their linguistic strengths. Basic subject matter should be taught in their dominant language, while they are developing their proficiency in English. Once they have developed fluency in both languages, their bilingualism should be supported and further developed.

The instructional units should also respond to the fact that many of these students come from poverty level families and may have had limitations in their educational background. This implies that a bilingual gifted and talented program must emphasize enriching their educational background — a concept of "educational empowerment" that will provide them with the skills and experiential background to function or compete with their English speaking peers.

Hartford's bilingual gifted and talented program is a multi-faceted, comprehensive program which has been found to be effective in meeting the needs of this unique population. It is currently being implemented in three elementary schools in Hartford, and has been in operation since 1979. We serve children in grades K-6. The instructional approaches described here take into consideration the factors mentioned above, relating to gifted and talented education on the one hand, and bilingual education on the other.

Program Model:

There are three primary components of the program model:

1. **Resource Room** — Each school has a resource room and a full-time resource teacher. Each resource teacher is bilingual and has received specialized training in gifted and talented education. The resource room has a wide range of materials, both in English and in Spanish. Instructional activities which take place on a part-time "pull-out" basis, emphasize small group instruction and independent projects. The resource teacher also acts as a facilitator to support instructional activities taking place in the regular classroom.

2. **After School Program**—Selected students also participate in an after school program (4 days per week), which is staffed by regular classroom teachers who are trained, and paid, to teach in the after school program. Each teacher has an area of expertise, such as science, language, computers or art. Instructional activities in the after school program are similar to the resource room activities. The after school program provides the opportunity to extend the student's day.

3. **Regular Classroom Component**—The regular classroom is an important component of a resource program in that the gifted and talented children spend most of their time with the regular classroom teacher. Where appropriate, their instruction is accelerated in reading and math. With the support of the resource teacher, enrichment activities also take place in regular classroom, especially when the identified children complete their regular classroom work before their peers.

Staff Development:

For the instructional program to be effective and well-integrated, staff development activities are essential. Our staff development efforts focus on three groups:

Resource teachers receive the most intensive training, which includes summer workshops, after school training, and university courses.

After school teachers participate in a one-week pre-service orientation session (4 afternoons), and meet periodically to review progress and problems

Classroom teachers receive initial orientation about the bilingual gifted and talented program through one of their regularly scheduled staff meetings. Although this is not enough time to give an in-depth presentation, the teachers are invited to participate in subsequent optional training sessions which focus on particular topics of interest or concern.

Furthermore, an ***Enrichment Team*** has been formed in each school. The Enrichment Team consists of the resource teacher and several classroom teachers. The objective of the team is to meet together for cooperative discussion, planning, and coordination of gifted and talented program activities in the school, with a special emphasis on the regular classroom component.

Student Needs Assessment

During the identification process, student strengths, needs, and interest areas are assessed. Information for this purpose comes from test results, and from the subjective observations and comments of the parents and teachers. This information is carefully reviewed by the resource teacher. Throughout the year, additional assessments of student needs and interests are accomplished through various student questionnaires, and through "activities for talent to surface". For those students who are formally identified through the "Planning & Placement Team" (PPT) process, individual instructional objectives are determined and recorded using the "Individualized Educational Program" (IEP) forms. These forms were developed to record strengths, weaknesses, and interests, as well as levels of linguistic ability, and behavioral characteristics. The portion of the IEP dealing with the educational plan includes objectives for the gifted and talented resource room and for the regular classroom component, as well as specifying counseling needs where appropriate. Coordination among the instructional components is essential.

Curriculum Guidelines:

There is a wealth of curriculum units and materials available in the field of gifted and talented education. There also is a wealth of curriculum units and materials available in the field of bilingual education. Over the several years of implementation of Hartford's bilingual gifted and talented program, project staff have reviewed and attempted to select some of the best materials available in each of the fields. In addition, because of the novelty of the field of bilingual gifted and talented education, staff found it necessary to adapt and develop their own curriculum units and activities. This involved a great deal of creativity and sophistication on the parts of the full-time staff and the teachers in the after school program.

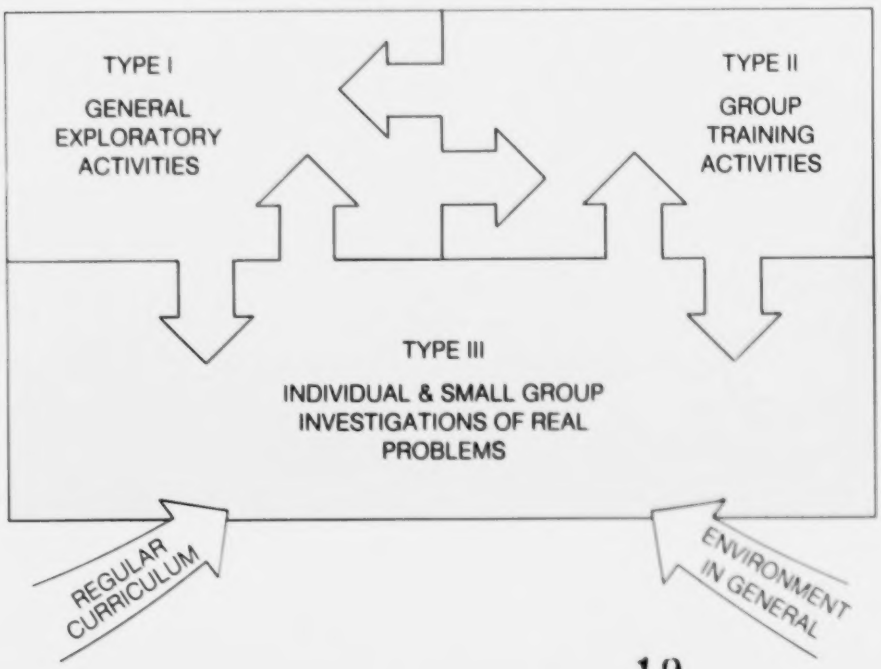
Enrichment Triad: One of the cornerstones of our instructional approach is the "Enrichment Triad" as conceived by Dr. Joseph Renzulli. The Enrichment Triad, as illustrated below, encompasses three types of instructional activities.

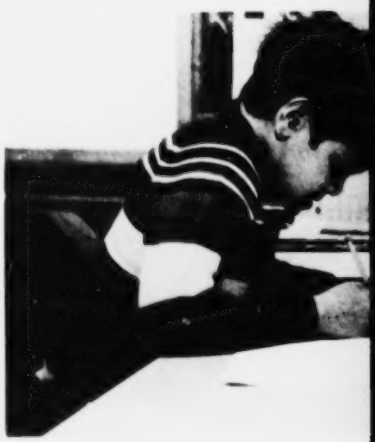
Type I—General Exploratory Activities refers to the provision of a range of enrichment activities to expose children to new topics. These activities can include speakers, field trips, videotapes, learning centers, bulletin boards, etc.

Type II—Group Training Activities refers to the development of skills related to the specific area(s) of student interest. For example, a student interested in oral history might need training in the use of a tape recorder, how to write probing questions, and how to conduct an exploratory interview. Skill development activities also include the development of critical and creative thinking skills.

Type III—Individual and Small Group Investigations of Real Problems refers to the independent projects which are the culmination of the student work in the gifted and talented program. Individual and small group projects involve the students in first-hand inquiry, creative development, and a final product which has a real world audience. The topics relate to areas of personal interest for the students.

Bilingual Education—The other cornerstone of our instructional activities relates to our philosophy of bilingual education. In this regard we work in the context of and in cooperation with Hartford's existing bilingual program. Students in Hartford's bilingual program are taught basic subject matter in their dominant language, while also participating in English as a second language classes. Students are first taught to read in their dominant language. Once they have mastered reading in that language and have also developed their English oral language skills, they are then taught to read in English.





While the curriculum of the bilingual gifted and talented program does not include basic subject matter instruction, we do attempt to develop language skills in both languages. Most of our instructional units are available in English and in Spanish. Until a student develops sufficient proficiency in English he or she participates in activities that are primarily in Spanish. Students who are bilingual (proficient in both languages) can participate in activities in either language. However, in all cases we attempt to use both languages, in order to provide vocabulary enrichment and to challenge the students to develop and utilize full bilingual proficiency.

Because of the superior language abilities of these bilingual gifted and talented students, there are some special features to our language development activities:

—most of these children, can learn language more quickly, so there is an accelerated approach to English language development

—there is an extra emphasis on learning correct use of English and Spanish (higher standards and expectations)

—more enriched vocabulary is used

—higher level reading assignments are given in both languages.

It should be pointed out that the bilingual gifted and talented program is an integrated program in that English dominant children also participate in the program. In each of the participating schools, the bilingual gifted program is the only gifted program in the school, and all children are eligible to participate, regardless of dominant language.

Sample Curriculum Units

Based on these guidelines and strategies, a variety of curriculum units have been developed and implemented in the resource room and after school programs. These units are based on a theme or topic, emphasize student involvement, and lead to specific products at the end of the units. Some samples are:

1. Community Resource Guidebook
Several third, fourth, and fifth grade students studied resource places in the city of Hartford in order to be able to use them on their own. They also prepared a bilingual guidebook to these resource centers, which was distributed to parents.

2. Science Reading
Several fifth and sixth grade students were taught special techniques for reading science books. The program included a trip to the Talcott Mountain Science Center.

3. Other Countries of the World
Several third and fourth grade students learned how to write reports at the same time as they independently researched the lives of people in other countries. The activities included communication with people in other countries by ham radio.

4. Newspaper
Several fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students developed a newspaper for the program, which emphasized advanced newspaper skills such as lay-out, editorials, and well-written articles.

5. "Artistas a la Orden" ("Artists at your Service")
Within the context of the on-going art classes, individual student artists were asked by other teachers or students to do specific art work, such as pictures for the newspaper, sets for a play, or 3-dimensional displays to accompany student projects.

6. "Bilingual Urban Adventure"
In one special project, the Project Director and a group of students developed a computer-based "bilingual Urban Adventure" game, in which users learn about the resources of Hartford, by exploring them through the computer. The program uses a light pen, and a spech synthesis device.

Computers

The bilingual gifted and talented program has made extensive use of computers acquired through local funds and a special grant from the Apple Education Foundation. Currently each center has three Apple computers, which are used in a variety of ways:

—students write programs in BASIC and Logo

—students and teachers put together school newspapers with a word-processor

—children learn geometric relationships while playing with computer graphics

—children develop creativity and artistic expression by using a Koala Pad and other graphic devices

—students use telecommunications to access weather data, in order for them to learn about the weather and make their own forecasts

—staff maintain student records using a computerized data base

Dissemination Materials:

Related to the area of instructional approaches, we have the following materials available for dissemination:

Language development for bilingual gifted and talented: a packet of materials providing more details about instructional approaches and activities for bilingual language development

"Bilingual "Interest-a-lyzer": an adaptation of Dr. Renzulli's "Interest-a-lyzer" which uses a questionnaire format to determine areas of student interest. Our adaptation is available in English and Spanish.

Bilingual computer applications: a packet of materials detailing a variety of ways that computers can be used in a bilingual gifted and talented program.

Conclusion

Readers of this document are likely to come from either of two perspectives: those with a background in **gifted and talented education,** and those with a background in **bilingual education.** We hope that the information presented here will help each group better understand the instructional considerations pertinent to the other.

We feel that it is essential for bilingual gifted and talented children to receive the benefits of both bilingual education and gifted and talented education. Without either, the potential contributions of these exceptional children may be lost. With both, they are likely to become the future intellectual and artistic leaders of our country.

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